

GINO GASPARELLI

ON DEC. 7 1941 MY DUTY STATION WAS AT WHEELER FIELD ON THE ISLAND OF OAHU, ONE OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS. WHEELER FIELD WAS THE LARGEST FIGHTER AIR BASE ON THE ISLAND. THE BASE HAD BEEN ON AN ALERT STATUS ALL WEEK LONG UNTIL SATURDAY MORNING 6 DEC. 1941.

THE ALERT WAS CALLED OFF AFTER MORNING INSPECTION, BUT ALL OF THE 48 OR SO FIGHTER PLANES WERE LEFT LINED UP WING TIP TO WING TIP ON THE RAMP IN FRONT OF THE 4 LARGE PLANE HANGARS. ALL PERSONNEL NOT ON WEEK END DUTY COULD GO ON WEEK END PASS.

I DID NOT LEAVE THE FIELD THAT SATURDAY BECAUSE A SGT. FRIEND, AND I HAD PLANNED TO TAKE A TRIP AROUND THE ISLAND ON SUNDAY, 7 DEC. 1941 AFTER BREAKFAST.

AFTER RETURNING TO MY BARRACK FROM THE MESS HALL WHICH WAS ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES TO EIGHT I WAS TALKING TO SGT. PRICE AND WE HEARD PLANES THAT DID NOT SOUND ANYTHING LIKE OUR OWN P40 OR P36 FIGHTER PLANES. THEY ALSO SOUNDED LIKE THEY WERE FLYING VERY LOW. THIS MUST HAVE BEEN JUST ABOUT FIVE MINUTES TO EIGHT O'CLOCK A.M.

I RAN OUT THE BACK DOOR OF THE BARRACK, LOOKED UP AND SAW A LARGE BLACK PAINTED PLANE COMING TOWARDS MY BARRACK. THE PLANE WAS FLYING NO HIGHER THAN TREE TOP LEVEL, AND I COULD SEE THE MACHINE GUNNER IN THE REAR SEAT. THE PLANE WAS JUST ABOUT OVER THE BARRACK WHEN HE RELEASED A BOMB. FOR A MOMENT I WAS STUNED WHEN I SAW THIS, AND REALIZED WE WERE UNDER AN ATTACK.

I RAN BACK INTO THE BARRACK SCREAMING THAT WE WERE UNDER AN ATTACK, AND ORDERED THE MEN IN MY SQUAD TO GET OUT, DRESSED OR NOT DRESSED. SOME WERE STILL IN BED, AND SOME STILL HAD HANG OVERS FROM BEING ON PASS THE NIGHT BEFORE. THAT FIRST BOMB HAD JUST HIT ONE OF THE HANGERS.

AFTER TELLING THE MEN TO GET OUT FAST I ALSO RAN OUT THE BACK DOOR, AND SAW SGT. THOMAS OUR PLATOON SGT. ORDERING THE MEN TO HEAD FOR A ROW OF HIGH SHRUBS, AND SMALL TREES ABOUT SEVENTY YARDS FROM OUR BARRACK. WE HAD NO ARMS WHATSOEVER SO WE JUST TOOK COVER UNDER THE HIGH SHRUBS, AND SMALL TREES. I AM POSITIVE WE WERE SPOTTED BY SOME OF THOSE JAP PILOTS BECAUSE AFTER A FEW MINUTES SMALL TWIGS, AND BRANCHES BEGAN TO FALL DOWN DUE TO THE MACHINE GUN FIRE FROM THOSE PLANES. WHEN THINGS BEGAN TO QUIET DOWN, SOME MEN WERE ORDERED TO GO TO THE SUPPLY ROOM, AND BREAK OUT BOXES CONTAINING 30 CAL. RIFLES. I WAS ORDERED TO TAKE MY SQUAD AND TRY TO GET AND BRING BACK CEMENT BAGS WHICH WERE DOWN ON THE FLIGHT LINE NEAR ONE OF THE HANGERS.

OUT OF A FEW HUNDRED MEN STATIONED AT WHEELER FIELD THAT MORNING, CASUALTIES AMOUNTED TO EIGHTY DEAD AND WOUNDED

*Gino Gasparelli* - ALC WHEELER FIELD